1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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labors, for all the tasks not strictly connected with the household fall in their province. We shall have occasion later to examine fully the sexual dichotomy of labor such a division of tasks represents.

For the countryman the Christmas season, from the beginning of Advent to Epiphany or "Little Christmas" (January 6), is the dead of winter. It is a period in which all farm work is at a standstill. The farmer has completed the last of his harvest and brought in the last of his potatoes from the field. The cattle are securely housed against the winter cold. The farmer feels himself free to sit round the house during the cold wet days and devote his season to holiday. The working day is at its shortest. Outside, the weather is usually unsettled, a cold rain falling on the sodden fields. It is for him as though the course of the year had stopped and were waiting, gathering its forces for the new year.

It is a period of great social activity in the local community. The very important religious ceremonies of the season call forth an intensified activity in the parish. There are constant visits back and forth; each house is ready to offer its hospitality to its neighbors; and the community gives itself over to dances, cards, talk, and calls. Not until the religious season closes with Epiphany does the countryman feel that the year begins anew.

With the beginning of the year, the cold uncertain weather with its succession of bitter wet days, leaving the fields too wet to work, does not end, but the Christmas season has marked the transition. The farmer must now make his plans for the spring planting, lay in his seed, repair machinery, and make ready for the season about to begin. On drier days he can busy himself in the field in cleaning ditches and drainages. In the evenings much of the conversation on visits and at home revolves round the coming planting, and both new and traditional experience with

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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593 tionship of their parents. Thus there is a good deal of the boy's regard for his mother in his attitude toward his sister. Likewise for the sister, especially in the years when both are fully adult, the brother comes to have much of the position of the father, especially if he is older. He shares the masculine ultimate control of farm and household. If she remains on the farm after her brother's marriage, she must look to him for her dowry.

The country people have a good deal to say about the strength of this bond. Deep-rooted in the years of common subordination and common association, it survives the re- [574] moval of the sister to another house and farm. It means much visiting and a close relationship with the coming children. The country people marvel that a young child [604] may often like its mother's brother better than its "own uncles." They mean thereby that the bond survives in equal strength with that where the common patrilineal interests of a common family name are in question, as in the case of two brothers and their children.

589 That the complete family is the complete unit of life both 592 social and economic to the small farmer is admirably illustrated by the incomplete families of the countryside. By the term "incomplete" the authors indicate those many small farms which are worked by spinsters, bachelors, widowers, and widows.

589 In such farms, control is exercised by the person owning 592 the farm. A widow is usually helped out by a male rela- 562 tive, brother, nephew, or son. Here again the male devotes himself to the tasks which in ordinary circumstances would fall to the father in a full family unit. The control over expenditure and the disposal of farm goods rests, however, with the woman. But even then the bargaining in such typically masculine enterprises as the cattle fair would be delegated by her to her helping relative. In one instance which came to the authors' notice a young widow called

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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man called upon his brother-in-law to lend him his son to help drive his cattle to the fair. In a case similar to the last, a violent quarrel arose because an uncle, who "had right" to lend a son badly needed in doing some fence work, refused to do so. And in the same scale of value a family which did not attend the funeral of a relative was subjected to great criticism for being "unfriendly."

In fact, failure to fulfill the pattern of conduct demanded by extended family obligations leads often to punitive action on the part of the aggrieved party. Near R— a small farmer, who neglected his garden and forced his father-in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support, was finally beaten up one night in his own house by the irate in-laws. Ordinarily, of course, failure to fulfill such obligations either in directly social situations or in agricultural coöperation does not lead to such violent conflict, but rather to an estrangement. The niggardly "friend," especially the one who refuses or fails to return an obligation, is held up to general condemnation, not only by his kindred but by the whole community. The position of a small farmer near but not in Luogh was the result of such failure. He was regarded by all his neighbors and kindred as a "miser" and a "Jew" and on several occasions was accused of petty thefts by them, which perpetuated the breach. As a result he lived as a recluse, refusing even to visit others; in return he was not greeted by his "friends."

The obligations of this sort[2] extend to visiting and to the hospitality which the Irish countryman deems so great a virtue. "A sup of tea" and such food as eggs and bread is

[2] The word *cóir* (a fit and traditional right or duty) corresponds almost exactly with the full range of the small farmer's obligations, as we have seen. It well reflects the farmer's habit in two other uses. The phrase *cóir mhaith* means good food. When the speaker says, *tá cóir mhaith agam ansud* (there's a good feed for me there), he refers not so much to the food itself as to the social situation in which he finds himself well provided for. And the term of address, *duine cóir* (worthy fellow), indicates that "worthiness" springs from a fit observance of one's obligations.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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574 602 "put down before" the countryman who is traveling to town or to the fair or who is merely making the evening *cuaird*, or visit, at which the older men of the local community gather round the hearth to chat and retell the old stories of legend and folklore and discuss the news. Niggardly treatment in this regard leads to disputes, as does abuse of the privilege by the visitor. A standing joke in Luogh was the treatment given to her too-voracious relatives there by a woman who exercised considerable ingenuity in starving them out without offending them.

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574 602 273 Similarly, the obligations extend to such occasions of good fellowship and holiday as the fair day and market. "Friends" treat one another at the local public houses on meeting in town. Thus one countryman complained to the authors that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his "friends." Others are able to strike a happier balance; and a religious pledge of teetotalism likewise surmounts the difficulty.

241 594 182 The sum of the evidence presents the small farm economy as a family situation in which economic effort, individual and coöperative, is controlled by the social forces operative within the family. Labor connected with agriculture is merely one feature of a total constellation of behavior, enforced through obligations reciprocal in nature and maintained by sentiments and sanctions in a traditional setting.

Marriage transfers the boy into the adult farm-owning man, the farm father into the old man; it brings the same changes for the women. Such changes are, of course, not abrupt; the groups which are substantially of the same age do not undergo disruption with the movement of one of their number from status of boy to that of man. But, on the other hand, there are general patterns of behavior which mark off these groupings in an informal manner, and which betray their origin in a social valuation of age differences.

The behavior of the different age groups is of the most intimate everyday kind, and consequently reflects those differentiations of status which are given formal and explicit recognition at marriage. Felt to be too natural a part of daily life to require explanation on the part of the farmers themselves, their behavior, nevertheless, is very easily remarked by the observer. In the ordinary countryman's house, for example, the man of the house and whatever older men may be present occupy chairs drawn up before the hearth. The hob by the fire belongs to the old couple by right. The younger people, the sons and daughters, sit behind them round the room on other chairs or on the window seats of the rectangular kitchen, which makes up the principal room of the usual small farmer's house. This arrangement shows itself best in the *cuaird* or visit, where the old men of the district drop in on neighbors and "friends" to sit around the hearth together passing the evenings of winter in conversation, singing, discussing the news, and telling the old stories of legend and folklore. At the *cuaird* younger men and women, if they attend, sit behind, usually leaving the center of the stage to the old men, and the children stand up behind in silent admiration. The younger men have their own pursuits, of course, though at present the divergence may be more marked than formerly. Lately, in Clare at least, they have taken to card playing on a gambling basis for stakes of small livestock in the country districts.

1:Arensberg & Kimball E-5 (1932-1934) 1940
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gives advantage to the buyer rather than to themselves, they would change nothing in it. Prowess in bargaining is recognized and valued in every person. A man who is a good hand at bargaining or a good intermediary between bargainers soon makes a name for himself. The man who can drive a hard bargain gets a hearty respect from his neighbors and wins a grudging respect even from his victims, but the man who lets himself be bested wins scant sympathy. At the same time, however, sharp or unfair practice soon wins condemnation.

All this lore the child learns as he does man's work. He is taken to fairs from the age of ten or so and stands on the fair green or in the streets the long hours from dawn until the last buyer leaves. He learns from actual experience and finds his lessons reviewed again and again in the constant discussion at home and on *cuaird* of prices, buyers, famous bargains and bargainers.

At home the approach of a fair leaves no doubt as to the importance of the event. Farmers talk of prospects for days ahead. Each man is asked what he intends to try to sell, and the merits and prospects of each beast are common coin. Every man hazards his opinion as to what prices will be, how they will compare with those of recent fairs in surrounding villages, and what beasts will find the readiest market. In the light of all this discussion the ordinary farmer makes up his mind either to try his luck or wait for a better chance.

Should he decide to try his luck in the coming fair, he has a well-established procedure to follow. He gathers his stock together, gives them any special attention they may need. If the fair is a long way off, he drives his bullocks and heifers halfway there the day before and puts them overnight in the field of a "friend" along the road. In this he has the aid of a boy or a "friend," after the pattern of kinship reciprocities.

On the day of the fair he is up as early as one or two in the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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476 keen over the dead. This conduct is reciprocal;
602 'friendliness' implies mutual obligation. One countryman gave me as his reason for going to the funeral of a second cousin: "I have right to go, they always come over to this side". When in Luogh a man's wife died and his sister took over the child, she did the 'friendly' thing that she 'had right to do'. In the very same terms a man 'made bold' upon his brother-in-law to lend him a son to help drive cattle to the fair, as the brother-in-law 'had right' to do.

In fact, failure to fulfil the pattern of conduct demanded by the obligations of 'friendliness' may bring punitive action on the part of the aggrieved kindred. We have seen this before in the story of the 'old man's curse' in the first lecture. In a part of Clare, not many miles from Luogh, a small farmer neglected his garden and forced his father-
[578] in-law to send up loads of potatoes for his wife's support. He was finally beaten up one night in his own house by his irate in-laws. Ordinarily, perhaps
[626] failure leads rather to an estrangement; it holds one up to general condemnation by the whole community. Persistence in failure leads to social death; the recluse is greeted by no one, not even his 'friends'.

● 574 But fulfilment entrenches one in social life. The
602 obligations extend to visiting and hospitality, the countryman's great virtue. 'A sup of tea' is 'put down before' the countryman who is travelling to

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

town, or to the fair, or only making the evening *cuaird* or visit. The obligations pattern good-fellowship and holiday, for friends treat one another when they meet near a pub. In fact one countryman complained to me that he dreaded the fair day, for he must drink up all his profits with his friends, but others seem to manage their obligations better.

And lastly, the obligations of kinship are a bulwark against disaster. The Johnny mentioned above sent the cow down when it was badly needed. If you have read the book from the Blaskets called *The Islandman*, you remember that the Islandman might not marry the girl of his choice because she was a mainlander and the friends she would bring him would be too far away from Great Blasket when he needed aid. In the system of reciprocal duties which surround kinship, much of the strength of the countryside against external destruction and internal disaster is explained.

We have followed the countryman a long way. In watching him at his work, we have begun to recognize the outlines of the way of life which is his. He is a subsistence farmer, as we now call the peasant, but he is more. He is part of an intricate social system which patterns his life along definite channels, which brings him rewards, gives him incentives, and deals its own punishments. The traditional patterns of old custom have a place in this system; folklore surrounds it as in the

8:Arensberg E-5 (1932-1934) 1937
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Relative age thus makes a difference in status in the local community. It fits one into a definite place in a scheme of values, and lastly, it equips one with a definite role in communal life which one can fill well or ill. 561

The conduct that reflects this state of affairs thrusts itself into the observer's view again and again in rural Ireland. One finds it wherever one meets the countrymen together. The relations between young and old in the community, like those between parent and child within the family, are understandable in the light of the roles of the broad age groups.

First, there is the matter of privilege and precedence. To an outsider there may seem little enough in the countryman's way of life to allow for such distinctions. But from within, that little looms much greater. The old fellows, the men of full status who head farms and farm-working corporations of sons—those who have turned or are about to turn over their control to a younger generation—are accorded a very real precedence. In their own houses we have seen it to be very great; in the community at large it is little less so. A [574] farmer visiting another takes his place at the hearth seat, his sons lag behind and occupy the back of the room. When the community gathers in the wake- [764] house to honour the dead, the places by the fire go to the old adult 'men' and 'women'; the 'boys and girls' must group themselves behind. They

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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CHAPTER VIII.

THE INTERIOR OF THE HOUSE: FIRESIDE AND FOOD.

As we step inside an old Irish cottage, over a threshold of stone slabs or a pattern of small cobble-stones, we tread on a hard mud floor in which we may see, towards the hearth, the "pot hole" where the large iron pot rests when it is lifted off the fire. I have noticed similar holes in the mud floor, with the remains of the round-bottomed pottery vessel inside, near the excavated hearths of Irish houses nearly 40 centuries old. In paved kitchens a block of wood set flush with the flags answers the same purpose or there may be an iron pot rest (Fig. 25). The area surrounding the hearth is always paved, and the fire itself, in the old style, is at floor level. We shall be invited to take a seat at the fire, for this is the place of honour given to strangers: the fireside is both the focus of family life and the symbol of hospitality. The seat may be a stone slab built into the fireplace, so that the social tradition is incorporated in the architecture of the hearth, or it may be a roughly made but sturdy chair, bench or "creepie" (Fig. 26). The low stool not only brings one near fire-level, but keeps one's head out of the peat smoke hanging in the open rafters, while its three legs find firm footing on the uneven floor. Other low stools are made of solid turf or wood—a section of a tree-trunk—or again of coiled straw-rope, while chairs are often made with seats of sugán or of rush. Comfortable high-backed chairs fashioned out of straw in the manner of a

Fig. 25.

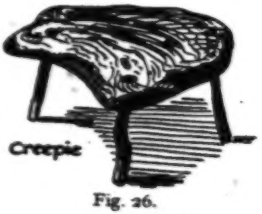

Fig. 26.

9: Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1942
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372 796 221 county. Originally they were intended, it is thought, to keep the sun, now about to decline, on its course, but they also played a part in the blessing of crops and animals. In Donegal until lately a burning turf was flung into each patch of growing corn. These and the other relics recorded are of course, not peculiar to Ireland: they are part of the common heritage of the ancient civilization of Eurasia. There is evidence that this festival was important also in fishing communities. The inhabitants of the Galway Claddagh, for instance, marched through the town in procession on St. John's Eve, "gaily dressed and miming, to the accompaniment of music; they collected money for merrymaking from the townspeople, and spent the evening dancing, drinking, and lighting bonfires in their own quarters."

796 221 The Lammas festival is nowadays particularly associated with fairs, and the first of August, is referred to in Gaelic as "Lewy's Fair." But other traces of old custom survive. My colleague Dr. O'Brien tells me that in mid-Down, on the first Sunday in August, crowds of countryfolk assemble, accompanied by fiddlers, at the great prehistoric hill-top cairn on Slieve Croob. The "Criocan Thorn," in the heart of Slieve Bloom, is the scene of similar assemblies on the last Sunday in July. Here they dance to the pipes, and bilberries are eaten: the day is called "Fraochán (bilberry) Sunday."

So the year goes on its course to the culminating festival of All Hallows. We have touched on one of its former functions, the reunion of the family after the summer booleying, in Chapter 6. It is an occasion of reunion still: all Irish folk like to be at home on this date, which is in some ways the most significant of the year, for it corresponds with what was once the New Year. Fires were lighted to mark the end of the period of growth and to herald the new year. (In England the ceremonies have become assimilated to the Guy Fawkes celebrations on November 5th). As at Beltane, the Halloween fire used long ago to supply light to rekindle the domestic fire, which now serves as a substitute in the many games of divination played by the young at this time. Hazel-nuts, apples and other fruits of the autumn take an important place

● [574] [372]

11: Browne D-5 (1894) 1895
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181 sources, my informants being those who are brought into close contact with the everyday life of the people. So far as it goes it is believed to be accurate. No attempt has been made to do otherwise than describe the actual state of the case, and while the faults of the people are not extenuated, yet any circumstances which may explain these are given as far as possible, and their good qualities are believed to be stated without exaggeration.

181 To the casual visitor the people, on acquaintance, are decidedly attractive; in the outlying parts of the district, it is true, they are at 609 first rather suspicious of strangers, but after a short time are very obliging and communicative, ready to show anything of interest in their neighbourhood, and hospitable to the best of their power. The natives of both the islands at Inishkea, are very hospitable and kindly to strangers, of whom they are, however, rather distrustful, ● [574] a visitor being welcomed into their houses, and entertained with the best they can give. With each other they seem in all parts of the district to be much given to chaff and joking of a more or less practical nature, and their sense of the ridiculous seems to be rather keen. In times of trouble or distress they are very kind, generous with what they have, and helpful to one another.

181 They are fond of music, dancing, and bright colours, and more than one song-maker in their own tongue, the Irish, has been a native 517 of this district; amongst these was the celebrated Dick Barrett, several of whose productions have been collected and published. In 53 common with most of the people of our rural districts, there do not seem to be many traces of artistic taste, and a native art is conspicious by its absence. One or two instances of attempted decoration were observed in Inishkea, none on the mainland.

181 On the whole, though cases of dishonesty and sharp practice in bargaining occur, they are honest in their dealings with one another. 577 As is often the case in remote districts, the people of one locality are sometimes on strained relations with those of another; thus there exists a certain amount of jealousy and distrust between the natives of the two Inishkeas, while the people of the mainland do not readily amalgamate with those of either island.

181 As regards intelligence, they are extremely sharp and shrewd, and seem rather fond of argumentation. There is but little crime, 691 with the exception of illicit distillation and drunkenness, but the people are very litigious, going to law with each other about slight trespasses and similar matters. This tendency is not by any means of recent origin, but has been remarked on by several writers. Maxwell

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
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quartzites. The bed-wing gives a narrow room additional width where it is most needed, near the fire. It may be that sufficiently long timbers for sizeable rafters were not easily procured in these mountain regions of poor soil. We may be dealing, however, with a feature which has died out in other regions and which has lived on in difficult country. The built-in wall-bed—the half-neuk—is known in the Orkneys, the Faroes and in the Hebridean black-houses and is characteristic of humble societies in other parts of the world. It is possible that in Ireland the wall-bed attests contacts with western Scotland which have repeatedly influenced that part of the country running south-westwards from Co. Antrim following the 'Caledonian grain' to Connacht. In any case the wall-bed appears to be restricted to the extreme north-western fringes of Europe.

The open hearth with all its associations is truly the heart and centre of house and home. The fire is, with her children, the 'care' of the woman of the house. 'A woman can never go to the fire', runs an Irish saying, 'without tampering with it.' The manifold duties of the housewife keep her moving about the hearth, tethered to it for most of the day. Her last duty at night is to 'smoor' it, burying a live turf in the ashes to retain a spark which can be fanned into a blaze next morning. This custom was fortified by the belief that the good folk, the fairies, would be displeased if there were no fire for them through the night. I have sat at fires which, it was claimed, had not been allowed to go out for over a century, or for as far back as family memory could go. It is to the fireside seat that the visitor is invited, for this is the place of honour, and it is around the fire that tales of old time are told. The magic of the open fire, playing upon the fancies of generations who have gathered round it, has engendered a host of beliefs and portents. The fire can give warning of wind and weather, of lucky and unlucky visitors, of marriage and death. Above all, it is a shrine to which ancestral spirits return, a link with the living past.[1]

[1]Since this chapter was written A. T. Lucas has published (in *Arctica*, 11, 16–35) an account of Wattle and Straw Mat Doors in Ireland. See page 65.

13:Evans K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

Thorough-bed.'[1] The Poor Law Commissioners reported in 513
1836 that nearly three-quarters of the 10,000 inhabitants of one parish were sleeping on the floor, though they add that this was because the bedsteads had been burnt to boil potatoes. Even after 1850 the custom of sleeping 'in stradogue' as it was called, was not unknown in the west.[2] In Ulster, too, though the master and mistress of the house would have slept in their wall-bed, the young children, where there was only one room, must have slept on the floor. Long custom as well as wretched poverty explains the statement made by Patrick McKye of a Donegal parish in 1837: 'Nor can many of them afford a second bed, but whole families of sons and daughters of mature age indiscriminately lie together . . . and all in the bare buff.'[3] The 352
wall-bed was a wooden frame built into the outshot which has been described earlier. It had its own wooden covering or tester to give protection from roof drips, and originally, to judge by the Hebridean black-houses, the covering was of sods. In Donegal, bog timber supplied the bed frame, and the mattress was made of wattles or of ropes twisted from the root fibres of bog-fir. That fir-rope mattresses were once standard fittings is shown by the specification for the beds to be supplied to the Belfast Charitable Association in 1774.[4] But some of the wall-beds in parts of Connacht were until recently mere stone benches covered with dried bracken. Half-ruined examples may be seen in the deserted houses of Slievemore on Achill Island.

In the house with fireside partition the kitchen bed often takes the form of a settle-bed, a seat by day and a bed by night. The front and seat are in one piece, hinged at the bottom so that the whole can be folded down to make a low bed (Fig. 18). In bachelor homes, where the settle-bed has been retained, I [574]
have been offered a seat on one which had been closed a moment before by bundling in the mattress and bedclothes. Placed against one of the side walls near the fire, the settle-bed

[1] J. C. Walker, *Historical Memoirs of the Irish Bards*, 2nd ed. (1818), Appendix I, 196–204.
[2] *The Saxon in Ireland* (1851), 192.
[3] Lord George Hill, *Gweedore*, 16.
[4] R. W. M. Strain, *The Ulster Medical Journal*, 22 (1953), 37.

13:Evans — K-5 (ca. 1940) 1957
ER6 Rural Irish ER6

XXI

OLD PISHROGUES

AMONG the serious nineteenth-century students of Irish folk-life a Dublin surgeon, who is perhaps better known as the father of Oscar Wilde, deserves special mention. Sir William Wilde was not only a frequent contributor to the learned journals but he found time to compile a pioneer catalogue of the Irish antiquities now housed in the National Museum of Ireland. His very active life spanned the Great Famine, and the monumental report on the *Tables of Death* which appeared as Vol. I of Part 5 of the Census of 1851 was largely his work. In it he dwells on the shattering effects of those tragic years, 1845–47, on the immemorial customs and natural poetry of the Irish peasants: 'The closest ties of kinship were dissolved; the most ancient and long-cherished usages of the people were disregarded; the once proverbial gaiety and lightheartedness of the peasant people seemed to have vanished completely, and village merriment or marriage festival was no longer heard or seen throughout the regions desolated by the intensity and extent of the famine.'[1] Another observer noted that the traditions of hospitality were weakened greatly and that padlocks made their first appearance at this time.[2]

Wilde observed that the coming of the railway at about the same period was a contributory factor in the change because it worked to a time-table—more or less—and involved an artificial division of the day instead of an observance of the signs of nature changing with the seasons. Time was related to social activity and had different values at various seasons of the year.

[1] *Census of Ireland* (1851), I, Part 5 (1956), 242.
[2] A. M. Sullivan, *The New Ireland* (1877), 65.

14: Westropp B-4, 5 (no date)1910-12
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COLLECTANEA.

A Folklore Survey of County Clare (*continued from p.* 60).

XII. *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds.*

It is unlucky to see the new moon through glass; to throw dust or slops out of a house on New Year's Day, as you throw away with them all the good luck of the year; to throw dust or slops towards a neighbouring "fort";[1] to see one magpie, or a "weazel" (stoat), without saluting it by bowing or taking off your hat; to go out of a house where they are churning without "putting your hand to the churn," *i.e.* giving a few strokes with the churn "dash," so that you will not "take" the butter; and to take fire out of a house,—so that, if you light a pipe indoors, it should be smoked out before leaving. Iron and pins,—except crooked pins with the points towards you,—should be picked up, and the first thrown over the left shoulder. Rub your hand on wood if it itches or after a boastful speech or speaking too confidently of the future; in east Clare you touch wood twice, with the phrase, "Good word (*or* time) be it spoken," after an imprudent expression.[2] You should bow to the new moon. Turn your money for luck after seeing the new moon. On visiting a friend in a new house, you should give some present, however small. In east Clare some persons are careful to throw a hen or other fowl that has died of disease over the fence on to their neighbour's land, to remove the ill-luck from their own poultry.[3] Others will not wash eggs offered for sale, as it stops

[1] So Dr. Macnamara and others.
[2] "Scratch it in wood, and it will come good," says a rhyme.
[3] Practised near Tulla, and resulting in some cases in great ill-will.

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MacNamara.[17] A certain Flann MacDonnchaidh, a very poor man, lived near the bush long ago, and dreamt "again and again" that, if he went to the Bald Bridge, Droichiod maol-na-Luimneaigh (Ball's Bridge in Limerick City), he would find money and make his fortune. He went there and walked up and down until he was worn out. He was on the point of going away when a cobbler asked him what he was about, and he told his story. The cobbler laughed, and told how he himself had dreamed of finding treasure under a bush at a place called Skaghvickencrow, but had wasted no time in looking for it.[18] MacDonnchaidh returned home, dug, and found a flag with an inscription in an unknown tongue. He left the stone on his hearth, and, as no local scholar could read it, he troubled no more about the matter. Years went by, and one night a wandering schoolmaster asked for hospitality, and of course got it. The "angel unawares" translated the inscription as "one side is more lucky than the other." Next day, when his guest was gone, MacDonnchaidh dug, and found so much money as to make rich men of himself and his descendants.[19]

The only tale of church treasure I have met with is that the silver bells of either Killeany or Kilmoon church lie hidden in the brook between their ruins called from the legend Owenacluggan.

Funerals and graveyards.—Though I have frequently attended funerals of persons of all classes and denominations in many parts of Clare, I have very little to tell of the ceremonies. Sometimes I have seen spades crossed on a grave, and long ago saw three crosses, made of twigs from a hawthorn tree in a graveyard, placed on a coffin. The body is usually carried feet foremost round the graveyard sunwise, and sometimes, but rarely, three times. The horrible habit of digging out all the contents of the grave is usual; the older coffin planks are thrown away, and the human remains

[17] *The Journal of the Limerick Field Club*, Part 4, p. 42.

[18] Cf. the well-known story of the Swaffham tinker and London Bridge.

[19] I heard this tale, perhaps in 1870, from John O'Halloran at Edenvale near Ennis, about the Crowes. Certainly that family (MacEnchroe's) has a hawthorn bush in its armorial bearings, and the motto "Skagh M'Enchroe." Dr. MacNamara conjectures that Flann's surname was really MacEnchroe.

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wrote a satire against the rats, and tried it on an infested house at Kilkee, in the same year, but without success.

About the same time certain men in Limerick City were famous for being able to free ships in that port from rats. Their method was to fix a razor, edge upwards, on the ship, and by their charms to force the rats to cut their throats on it.[30]

Dr. G. U. MacNamara tells me that Denis Curtis near Corofin cures liver complaints, bleeding, and cows that have swallowed raw potatoes. He puts his human patients on their backs on his anvil, and pretends to strike them with a sledge hammer. This is done on three occasions, on two Mondays and a Thursday. The patients then drink forge water. All the family have the gift of healing, but only one exercises it. The family legend says that St. Patrick's horse lost a shoe near Kilnaboy, and their ancestor shod it gratuitously. The saint therefore endowed the family with the power, and people even return from America to be cured by the smith.

Marriage tabu.—In eastern Clare, a newly-married woman attended Mass on the Sunday next after her marriage, and was severely criticised for doing so. Local opinion held that she and her husband ought not to attend public worship until the second Sunday after the marriage.[31]

Púcas.[32]—A recent apparition of the *púca* of Clonlara was described to me in 1911 as a dark, shadowy horse near the bridge over the Blackwater, about two miles to the south-west of the village. My nephew, Dr. Hugh Gerald Westropp, heard of similar appearances about 1888.

Lucky and unlucky deeds.[33]—The *geasa* and *buadha*, or tabus and lucky acts, relating to the present County Clare are described in the *Leabhar na g Ceart* (Book of Rights),[34] in a poem by Cuan na

[30] *Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*, vol. v., ser. iii., p. 362.

[31] I learn from a Petty Sessions case, March, 1911, at Derrygonnelly, that this custom prevails also in Fermanagh, and that friends and relatives do not visit the young couple in the interim, but entertain them on the second Sunday.

[32] Addendum to vol. xxi., p. 481.

[33] Addendum to section xii., *Lucky and Unlucky Deeds*, vol. xxii., pp. 203-4.

[34] Edited by John O'Donovan, 1847, pp. 16-21.

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next to the new one. Built in 1899, the present chapel has a bell tower in its yard, 346
and 500 feet from it on a trail leading north to the common land is a shrine made
of cement depicting Christ crucified, which was constructed in 1950. A curate who 793
lives in a rented house in Low Village looks after the spiritual needs of the people 794
of Inis Beag and those living in Inis Thiar. He travels to and from the neighboring [505]
island by canoe, although occasionally he takes advantage of the ship servicing the
islands when its schedule coincides with his own. The region has been served by
a parish priest since late in the eighteenth century following the relaxation of the
Penal Laws, but only in 1919 did a curate take up permanent residence in Inis Beag.
Prior to that the island was visited by clerics from the parish church and sometimes
from the mainland.

It is not known when the first elementary school was established in Inis 871
Beag, but the islanders claim that at least some formal education was provided
from the early nineteenth century on, first by landlords and then by the govern-
ment. Today, a "national school" with seven grades, or "standards," built in 1943, 872
stands on a terrace above the east end of the strand. Its 90 pupils are taught by 346
three instructors, two of whom are local girls and the third, the "headmaster," an
outsider. The base of the school building and the low walls surrounding it are
banked with accumulating sand, which has created much resentment against the
government for having put up the structure there rather than in a more protected
location, as advised by the folk. The former school, located next to the watch tower
on the promontory above Castle Village, was sold to an islander after it was
abandoned, and he partially razed it to obtain valuable building materials.

Three keepers are maintained in Inis Beag by the Irish Lights Service. 502
One or two men and their families made up the lighthouse personnel until 1929,
when a severe storm greatly damaged the installation and caused the women and
children to be ordered off the island for their safety. The keepers are rotated, with
two men on duty while a third vacations for two weeks, and from time to time
islanders serve as relief and maintenance workers and help unload supply ships.
A symbiotic relationship exists between the folk and the keepers, wherein the [476]
former are employed in the above and other capacities by the service, and the
latter dispense kerosene and other equipment, it is alleged, to pay for goods and
services provided them, such as craft objects which are sold on the mainland for
personal profit. The keepers attend church, utilize the shops, and occasionally pay [574]
visits to local households, and these visits are reciprocated by a few men and
children.

Trails, wells, springs, land areas, and coastal features also figure promi- 823
nently in the lives of the islanders. Place-names have been attached to each, most
of which were created prior to this generation, although fields in certain land areas
still are being named as they are manufactured. It is thought that many of the
place-names refer to archaic events, persons, and geographical conditions, and
legends have come to surround some of them. Others are meaningless in that their
constituent words no longer are understood because of either sound shifts or sheer
cultural loss. The derivation of place-names is a common topic of conversation,
and often prolonged and heated arguments arise over, for instance, the identity of
the man after whom a crag is named or the time at which buildings disappeared

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> conditions appraised.... The community regulates its internal affairs through the *cuaird* as well. It is here public opinion is formulated. There is nothing formal about the decisions made upon the incidents arising from day to day. The local community has no implement with which to enforce its will. But it has the power of gossip and boycott (Arensberg and Kimball 1940:190–191).

Decisions of this sort and their sanctions in Inis Beag rest largely in the hands of government officials and the priest, headmaster, and king.

Many folk long have believed that the island needs a council with representatives from each of the four villages serving on it, to foster cooperation and to formulate policies which bear on the welfare of all. After independence in 1922, a move was made to form such a council, but the civil war interrupted the process; since that time, according to the islanders, the opposition of curates and king, none of whom have wanted their vested interests threatened, has succeeded in blocking the formation of such a body. Other forces at work, however, are the lassitude and ambivalence toward authority of the people, and their dislike and jealousy of one another. They complain of the lack of leadership, or of the "wrong" kind of leadership, as in the case of the priest and king; but they are unable or unwilling to expend the energy needed to get themselves organized and "pull together" for the common good. Often those who advocate the formation of a council will, in the next breath, express their dislike or distrust of its potential members, or a desire to remain independent of its collective will should it run contrary to their own. A vacationing emigrant who said, "We have no sense of civic pride and responsibility but think only of ourselves.", assessed the situation accurately.

Among the traits attributed to Inis Beag folk by nativists and primitivists are self-reliance, independence, and individualism. But the self-reliance of the islanders has become undermined increasingly since 1891 by a benevolent government; their independence is severely curtailed by restrictions imposed on them by curate, headmaster, king, and their fellows; and their individualism is a figment of literary imagination disguising a strict conformism. Inis Beag as much as any community is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium, which gain their effectiveness as social control mechanisms from the deep concern of the folk with "saving face," and which serve to limit freedom of action and behavioral idiosyncracy. When asked to rank the major deficiencies of island life, the people almost without exception place the prevalence of malicious gossiping, along with poverty and the intrusion of the clergy into secular affairs, at the head of their list.

No matter how much the islanders detest gossiping when they are its victims, they nevertheless welcome every opportunity to engage in it. News of an event passes quickly by word of mouth from Low to Terrace Villages, and variations in the description of the event are usually numerous due to the distortions of rumor. In order to circumvent gossip, parties are organized at the last moment and invitations issued by small boys moving quietly from door to door in the night; persons will leave the island—sometimes to emigrate, visit the hospital with a serious illness, or enter an order—without previous announcement, running from their homes to the strand to board the last canoes for the steamer; and mail is posted just prior to the arrival of the steamer and picked up immediately after it

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is carried to the post office, for fear that the postmaster will open letters and talk publicly of their contents (or take money from them). It is customary for boys and young men to hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences in order to overhear conversations of passersby, or witness their misbehavior, which can be reported; this compels folk who move about after dark to conceal their faces and talk in whispers or low tones. When a person hidden in the darkness is accosted suddenly, he will vault a fence, run away, or crouch down and hide his face or draw a raincoat over his head and shoulders to avoid being recognized. Most social events and visiting take place after sundown, so that movements from one house to another will be unobserved.

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Deviant behavior once learned of assures its perpetrators of becoming the focus of gossip and ridicule. But ridicule seldom is voiced in the presence of the victim; rather, he or she is told of it by relatives and acquaintances who have witnessed or, more commonly, been told of it by others. My ballad not only took advantage of the ubiquity of rumor, but its composition, aided and abetted by two dozen respondents, enabled me to discover the existence of a seldom revealed tradition of satirical balladry, common to the Irish, which has singled out for opprobrium many folk in the past. During three summer visits to Inis Beag following 1960, my wife and I were able to witness the singing of my song publicly. We learned that it, as others of its genre, is sung only before small gatherings, and whether or not it (or certain of its verses) is sung and by whom depends on the makeup of the assembled group. Since ridicule is almost never expressed in the presence of its victim or his kin or close friends, we were able to gain information about kinship relations and factionalism by noting the juxtaposition of balladiers and audiences and which verses were sung.

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Courtship and Marriage

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Marriages are fewer and are entered into later in Ireland than in any other Western country. In 1951, approximately one-third of the men and one-quarter of the women in Ireland between the ages of 55 and 64 years had never married, while two-thirds of the men and two-fifths of the women between 25 and 34 years of age were single. Celibacy and age of marriage figures for Inis Beag approximate those for the rest of peasant Ireland. In a population of 350 persons, 116 are married; 13 are widows; 3 are widowers; and 33 males over 23 years of age and 21 females over 17 are single. Since marriage occurs between the ages of 24 and 45 years for men and 18 and 32 for women, based on statistics extending back to 1911, only 18 men and 9 women (excluding 3 women who, because of physical disabilities, probably never will marry) are eligible for marriage. Not only are 34.4 percent of the males bachelors and 22.6 percent of the females spinsters, but the average marriage age for men in the period 1951 to 1960 was 35.5 years and for women 24.8 (compared to an average for rural Ireland of 34.7 years for men and 28.7 for women in 1946). The age span between spouses married during the past half-century ranges from the husband being 21 years older than his wife to 4 years younger, but the average age span has been between 8 and 12 years for each of the five decades. The number of marriages per decade has been

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able degree, has been dominated by parents who have allowed him to take on few major responsibilities, has a mother who acts as a wife surrogate in all but the sexual sphere (at least consciously), has established a routinized existence, and has male companions for whom he feels affection and with whom he shares numerous work and recreational activities. Some men who have been promised or willed land, and who have consenting parents and brides-to-be, will balk at a match because they are "too happy with the lads," and, if persuaded to marry, they will attempt to retain as much of their bachelor role as possible within marriage—"The men run with the boys before marriage and carry on the same afterward." Several bachelors and spinsters almost have married several times in succession, only to find the sexual commitment on each occasion too difficult to make at the last moment.

Before the coming of a permanent priest to Inis Beag, it is asserted that young people contemplating marriage were able to "keep company" frequently and openly before the union was arranged, and that some pairings were "love matches." But since then—with the separation of the sexes from late infancy on, the ubiquity of gossip and opprobrium, and the actions of priests—courting almost has disappeared, and it is not uncommon for a couple awaiting their wedding to have little personal knowledge of one another. Contact on the island between the sexes today is limited to meetings at the few parties which take place, at the occasional summer dances, or *céilí*, held on a large flagging near the school, and sometimes "at the well" or "walking to the cow" during daylight hours. Two generations ago, private Sunday afternoon strolls afforded young men and women the opportunity of coming to know one another well, but these "rambles" about the island are done now only by couples of the same sex—one of the several manifestations of institutionalized friendship. Choice once again seems to be intruding into matchmaking, however, with the increasing demands of acculturated youths for marriage with "love."

Matches are the end product either of secret bargaining between the families involved which can extend for weeks, or of the impetuous act of a man who—goaded by companions or by stout, or both—will visit the home of his "chosen" after dark to negotiate, accompanied by a kinsman or close friend. The bargain, once made, is sealed by the male participants with the emptying of a bottle of whiskey brought by the prospective groom, after which a boy or young man of the household is sent out—often after midnight—to summon relatives and acquaintances for a night long party, known as the *cleamhnas* (the word for matchmaking in Gaelic). Sometimes this party is followed by as many as three more on consecutive nights, the expense for which is borne by the family of the bride-to-be. When the bargaining is protracted, it usually is done during the 12 days of Christmas or the final fortnight of Lent, and the match is announced soon after Epiphany or Easter. Hearsay concerning possible matches abounds at these times, but each year "most rumors are dry," unless, of course, "with a lot of drinking and urging a man might decide to take the plunge." It was customary in the past for the wedding to take place four days after the *cleamhnas*, but now the service must wait from one to three weeks until the genealogies of the families of the bride and groom are examined by the parish priest to determine their degree of consanguinity.

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585 choosing. The kiss of the newly united pair, which in most of the Western world terminates the marriage ceremony, is lacking in Inis Beag, and after leaving the chapel the couple stand for some time in the yard to receive congratulations from guests and others who have attended the wedding, until the procession forms once again to walk to the home of the groom.

[777] Once there, the groom's mother stands on the threshold and places the wedding cake for a moment on the head of her son, to compound the luck already [535] gained by borrowed tie and shawl and donation of shillings. The newlyweds dance together alone before the first dance figure is formed, but they spend most of the night seated side by side, talking to well wishers, while music, song, and dance [431] joyously abound in the adjoining kitchen. Presents are given the couple only by kin who have emigrated and by outsiders who have known the two long and well; [574] the same tradition holds true at Christmas among older children and adults. The wedding party, as the *cleamhnas*, may go on night after night, and so may the third party making up the marriage cycle a month later—the "dragging home," which is celebrated at the bride's former house. The term dragging home is employed when either the vernacular or English are spoken, but the word wedding, and its Irish equivalent *bainis*, are used interchangeably in both tongues. Although the bride must not enter her parents' house for a month after the nuptials, she is free to visit with them elsewhere.

The Family and Kinship

342 There are 79 inhabitable houses in Inis Beag, although many others of
343 hoary vintage still stand and have been converted into outbuildings. Only 71 of
621 these are lived in by the folk, however; 6 of the other 8 (1 of which houses the Dane) recently have been deserted by emigrants, and the remaining 2 are lived in by the curate and the headmaster. The following is a chart showing the categories of personnel occupying the 71 domiciles:

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Number of Households	*Personnel*
30	Husband, wife, and offspring
5	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's widowed mother
4	Husband and wife who are childless
4	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband
3	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's unmarried sister
2	Husband and wife who are childless and both parents of the husband
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and the husband's father who is a widower
1	Husband, wife, offspring, and both parents of the husband and his unmarried sister
1	Husband and wife whose offspring have emigrated
7	Widow and her unmarried offspring
5	Single man (bachelor)
2	Brother and sister both of whom are unmarried
2	Two brothers and a sister all of whom are unmarried
2	Widower and his unmarried offspring
1	Two bachelor brothers
1	Bachelor and his widowed sister-in-law

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fireplace has a profound psychological significance in Inis Beag and, in a sense, is a force drawing the family together. Now that only three hookers transport peat from the mainland—when in the past there had been more than a hundred—and the price of turf increases considerably year by year, coal or bottled gas stoves are being used by most families. Although coal and gas are cheaper to burn, and coal throws out more heat than turf, the coal fire in the hearth does not foster camaraderie as does the peat fire. The replacement of fireplace by stove and the "stink" and dirtiness of coal are denounced incessantly by the islanders, and the disappearance of the "sweet smell" of burning sods and a multitude of customs associated for generations with the peat fire are lamented.

Many functions are served by "the room." It can accommodate the displaced parents after their son has married, if all agree, for it has a bed which can serve them (as well as distinguished guests, spectators at parties, and now tourists and summer language school students). This chamber is the best kept of the house, with the newest and most valuable of the furniture and often a linoleum floor, and its walls and ceiling are whitewashed or painted frequently. Family heirlooms and objects of sentimental value, which are parted with only as a last resort, are found here. Religious pictures adorn the walls, and on the mantel over the fireplace are photographs of the family going back generations, especially of those who have emigrated or are deceased. When "the stations" are performed every two decades in the cottage, the mass is read in "the room," and certain rubrics used in this ritual are afterward kept here. Finally, the chamber serves as a dance floor when the crowd at a party in the house overflows the bounds of kitchen, hall, and street.

The social universe of the islanders is divided into four segments: close kin or "friends" (Previously, I have used this word in the American sense.), distant kin or "those I have a relationship with," other islanders, and outsiders or strangers. "Friends" normally extend generationally to include ego's parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, and collaterally to include his affines (spouse's kinsmen), siblings, and first, second, and third cousins—termed, respectively, "four-of-kin," "six-of-kin," and "eight-of-kin."[1] With the intensification of inbreeding, most of the folk are eight-of-kin, and this is why the parish priest examines the genealogies of families at the time of the match. Marriage between first cousins is forbidden, between second cousins demands permission from the bishop, and between third the consent of the parish priest. Distant kin are relatives extended collaterally beyond eight-of-kin, while outsiders include the curates, teachers who are not islanders, lighthouse keepers, the Dane, tourists of local renown, and, as I have just indicated, even in-marrying women and descendants of recently arrived immigrants (also, of course, inquisitive anthropologists).

Although inheritance and succession are patrilineal on the island, descent is bilateral—traced through both agnatic (father's) and uterine (mother's) lines --with a strong agnatic bias.

[1] These positions are pictured horizontally (generationally) and vertically (collaterally) in block form in Arensberg and Kimball 1940:96 in the chapter "Kinship System." The Irish kinship system is common to peoples of Western Europe and America (the Eskimo type), and much of the kinship information reported by Arensberg and Kimball applies to Inis Beag.

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green sweaters, men shamrocks in their buttonholes, and girls green hair ribbons, and there is much visiting in the afternoon following a special meal. Women spend the last weeks of Lent preparing new clothes for their spouses, their children, and themselves, which first are worn to mass on Easter. Eggs are accumulated before the feast day so that each member of the family will have several to eat at breakfast before mass, and in some homes the children gather and hide eggs the week before Easter to see who can collect the most by Sunday morning.

June 14th in Inis Beag is "pattern day," derived from the word patron, which honors the patron saint. Until the 1920s, when suppressed by the clergy, this day and the two days following it rivaled the 12 days of Christmas in festivity. Then it was customary for people from nearby islands and the mainland to visit Inis Beag, and the local folk in turn to attend pattern days in islands and communities in their vicinity. The celebration commenced with the digging out of sand from the church of the patron saint and from his tomb, or "bed," so that during the night of vigil islanders and visitors could pray while walking around the grave and rest in the church to gain special favor from the saint and from God. The day itself saw masses celebrated in the chapel, and athletic, dancing, and other competitions staged on the strand and contiguous common land. Tents were erected to accommodate vendors of food and drink, as well as solo and figure dancers who performed to the tunes played by visiting musicians of note. Most visitors departed at the end of the day, but those who remained were invited to take part in two more days of revelry in certain island homes, where dancing, singing, and drinking prevailed day and night. It was the prevalence of factional fighting and promiscuous behavior engendered by drunkenness which prompted the church to restrict the traditional practices of pattern day.

In the 1930s, the priest inaugurated a custom of celebrating mass on pattern day in the church of the patron saint; but it persisted for only two decades, and today the bed is cleared of sand but the church is not. My wife and I observed only 11 persons praying and resting during the night of vigil in 1960. Miraculous cures, appropriately embodied in legends and anecdotes, are claimed for persons who have propitiated the patron saint in this manner in the past, and most of those who still observe the vigil are seeking relief for physical ills. The most recent cures reported are for spinal meningitis, rheumatism, a deformed knee, and an eyeball pierced with a thorn. No work is done on pattern day now, and a dance in the evening, seldom attended by visitors other than tourists, is the only vestige of the gayety which once marked the day. This dance, just as the St. Patrick's Day dance, did not take place in 1960, even though an accordionist and two other mainlanders came out by *curach* to attend it; the shyness of local girls rather than the tide was the disruptive factor on this occasion.

All Saints is a holyday of obligation November 1st, and is followed next day by another feast—All Souls. One of the most popular of humorous anecdotes deals with All Saints' Day in a neighboring island, where once long ago the Church of Ireland pastor gave the day off to men working for him; when ten days later they asked to be off once again for St. Martin's Day, he inquired with seeming pique, "And where was Martin on All Saints' Day?" The feast of All Souls is also a workless day in Inis Beag, although the cemetery is given its one cleaning of the

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796 527 782 year during the early morning. The folk visit the church and graveyard throughout the day and are awarded indulgences for their prayers in behalf of souls of the dead residing in Purgatory. In the cemetery, prayers are offered for relatives, one at a time, and then for everyone buried there, those lost at sea, and those who have no one to pray for them. An islander going to the chapel makes a succession of visits inside to pray, retiring to the churchyard after each prayer; an indulgence is granted for every visit, and some children carry small stones and pile them outside of the chapel to keep count of the indulgences thus acquired. It is said of those who remain longest in the cemetery and make the most number of visits to the chapel that they are attempting to mollify the ghosts of relatives whom they treated badly when alive.

796 The 12 days of Christmas commence with the feast of the Nativity on December 25th and end with the feast of the Epiphany on January 6th, and include the feasts of St. Stephen on December 26th, Holy Innocents on December 28th, and Circumcision on January 1st. This is the high point of the year for the folk, even though it is a much quieter period today than it was half a century ago, when social concerns outweighed religious ones. Work is suspended altogether on Christmas and the three days following it and on January 1st and 6th, and during [167] the rest of the period only "light chores" are done. Importance is attached to the [582] 12 days over and above their religious significance and the fact that little work is done; for at this time emigrants return to Inis Beag on holiday; if a marriage is [574] to occur during the year it is likely to be arranged then; at least one party usually is given which attracts most of the adults; and the men gather in the pubs on [621] several nights to sing, dance, and tell stories. For weeks before Christmas, rumors abound as to which relatives will visit the island, who will marry whom, and where the party will take place; these serve to sharpen the anticipation of the islanders and to make them less mindful of the worsening of the weather.

[292] In preparation for the Christmas season, new clothes are fashioned—as at Easter—to be worn initially on the five feast days, and it is usual for a man needing [361] a new *crios* to have it woven in time for Christmas mass. Houses and streets are [356] cleaned and repaired, fireplaces whitewashed, and supplies are taken in for [262] the 12 days as steamer service is curtailed. On Christmas Eve, a special dish of [364] corned ling or cod smothered in sauce is served at "Christmas supper," and large white candles purchased in the shops are placed on the dining table and in one or more windows of the cottage, to be burned nightly during the 12 days. The sight from the sea of the darkened island with its hundreds of candles rivals in beauty the view of the mainland coast far away on St. John's Eve, when bonfires are [574] lighted as far as the eye can see. Relatives visit one another after Christmas supper, [431] and when the children have been put to bed, stockings are hung above the fireplace and filled by the parents with oranges, candies, ribbons, pencils, handkerchiefs, [861] and toys for the infants. Santa Claus is the gift giver, so infants are taught, and thus he can be used to promote good behavior on their part in the weeks prior to Christmas; this belief seldom persists into childhood, however, as older children [431] are eager to disabuse their younger siblings of it. Adults usually do not exchange gifts, but they receive them from kin and acquaintances abroad to whom they in [262] turn send Christmas cards. On Christmas Day, special cakes and breads are served

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at breakfast and lamb, if available, at supper, and the family goes out only to attend [262]
mass. Many homes are decorated then for the 12 days, with cards received and [368]
sprigs of holly placed on windowsills and fireplace mantels and crepe paper and
balloons hung from the ceiling. More visiting among relatives is done between [674]
St. Stephen's Day and Epiphany than at any other time of the year, and guests are
treated to cakes and drinks, which include liquor.

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Whereas the folk during the Christmas season are the most optimistic and
expansive, they are the least so for the three or more days following the death of
one of their number. Work halts until after the burial of the deceased—"out of
respect for the body"—and subdued talk focuses on death and salvation and the
tribulations of life on earth. It is at this time that the masochism of the islanders is
most in evidence, and they are most prone to discuss the teachings of the church,
to reveal doubts concerning the afterworld, and to bemoan their own sinful lives.
In evaluating the career of the person who has just died, an attempt is made to [761]
explain the cause of his demise, and both natural and supernatural causes are con-
sidered. Most deaths are attributed to the natural causes of old age, illness, and
accident; but death also can come as the result of God's will and the actions of
the Devil and malignant pagan forces, such as witches of the evil eye and ghosts.
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The immediate mourning for one who dies before the age of 40 years is deep and
prolonged, particularly if small children are left with only a single parent, and it
is believed that "the good die young." One of the most disliked traditions in Inis
Beag is that of formal mourning for a year, during which time social activities for
close relatives of the deceased are curtailed severely; they cannot attend parties,
sing, dance, or play music in their homes, and men must reduce in number their
visits to the pubs. Life is so dull as a matter of course, so the complaint is, that
placing restrictions on what few social activities are available makes it almost
unbearable.

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When a person dies, his body is "waked" in the house until taken in pro-
cession to the church during the late afternoon of the day following death. Another
procession escorts the coffin to the cemetery early the next morning, after it has
stood the night unattended near the altar. How many folk attend the wake and [602]
compose the two processions depends on the number of the dead person's kin, his [554]
prestige status, and how well he was liked. The "laying out" of the corpse for the
wake is done by close female relatives of the deceased; they wash the body and
powder its face, put on the clothes or habit, and prepare the bed on which the
corpse will rest. A man may be attired in new white bawneens and *crios* and a
woman in her wedding dress, but it is becoming more common today for the body
to be clothed in a purchased brown habit. On the breast the hands are crossed and
rosary beads entwined in the fingers, and the corpse is covered up to the chest
with a white sheet which later is used to wrap it up in the coffin. The manufacture [322]
of the coffin usually is assigned to one of the canoe and furniture makers, who [463]
assembles it crudely with unpainted boards and delivers it the night of the wake
or the following morning.

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The wake now is a solemn occasion in most of Ireland, and is attended for
the purpose of praying for the soul of the dead and sympathizing with the relatives 198
of the deceased. But until recently it was a gay affair, merrier than a wedding,

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Figure 11. Praying at the graveside of an islander

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grave by the two diggers who have leaped into the hole. After the priest has thrown three shovelfuls of dirt on the coffin, the grave is filled in rapidly by the diggers, and the close kin of the deceased and the pallbearers gather around the priest to recite a final Rosary. Those who did not visit the graves of relatives when entering the cemetery do so as they depart. Some graves remain unmarked following the funeral; others are marked with a wooden cross or uninscribed slab of local limestone; while still others have placed over them engraved headstones purchased on the mainland. Several large, flat tombstones dating back over a century cover members of particular families buried atop one another as sand accumulated.

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Twice a year, Inis Beag is visited for a day by the parish priest and a curate, who join the local curate to celebrate special masses, called "the stations" ("the confessions" in Irish), in two homes and in the church. Homes are chosen in such a manner that each of the four villages is represented every year, and each home in the island is so honored every 16 to 22 years. For weeks in advance of the stations, both families are hard at work cleaning, painting, and repairing their houses and surrounding streets, fences, and outbuildings in preparation for the event. Confessions are heard by the three priests the night before, and holy water is sprinkled by them in the streets and on the outbuildings near the two houses as a blessing prior to the masses at nine o'clock in the morning. Stations in the homes are conducted by the visiting clerics and in the chapel by the Inis Beag curate, and the folk are free to attend any one of the three services. Following the masses, the priests and the three local teachers are entertained at breakfast in the chosen homes, after which the sacrament is carried to those who are confined. The families involved look forward eagerly to the event, for the stations are believed to bring them luck and "to drive out the 'big fellow' for a long time." It also forces them

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or Sean O'Sullivan's recent *Folktales of Ireland*. But a further word must be said of the tales recited by the *seanchai*. Popular among local legends are those dealing with such topics as the famine, evictions and other excesses of past landlords, visits to the island by the Black and Tans seeking political refugees, shipwrecks, and tragedies at sea among fishermen. Stories of the supernatural center around the actions of fairies, the pookah and banshee, those with the evil eye, phantom ships, mermaids and sea demons, and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. These local legends sometimes qualify as anecdotes, and it is humorous anecdotes which the folk refer to as jokes. Outsiders—such as returned Yanks—are responsible for introducing true jokes, but often these are not told and soon are forgotten, especially if they are "dirty jokes." There is no indigenous dirty joking tradition because of sexual puritanism. I have heard men use various verbal devices—innuendos, puns, and asides—that they believed bear sexual connotations; relatively speaking, they are pallid. In the song that I composed, one line of a verse refers to an islander who arose late on the morning of the shipwreck after "dreaming perhaps of a beautiful mate;" this is regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub.

Storytelling in the past took place mostly between the last week of October and early January, when inclement weather forced a slackening of the fishing regime, and the Christmas season kept people in and near their homes. Nowadays, card playing almost nightly during November and part of December by many of the men has become a substitute activity, which excludes the participation of women and children who once composed a part of the audience addressed by the storyteller. At any one time during this period, several groups met to hear Inis Beag narrators; a *scéalaí* or *seanchai* might be visited by a group and serve as host, or he might be invited into or visit on his own another household, and word of his presence would quickly draw an audience. The session lasted from eight or nine o'clock until midnight, and a tale might be so long that its telling occupied an entire evening, or even two or three consecutive nights. After completing a brief narrative, the storyteller might call on a colleague in the audience to recite a sequel, or the hearers might request that he continue or urge another to contribute a tale.

The average sized audience was composed of a dozen persons, although as many as 20 might attend a session. Small children seldom were allowed in the room unless they were members of the family of the host, nor were women of another household; the children were admonished to sit quietly and not to talk or whisper, and the women knitted or crocheted while listening. Seated in a semi-circle around the hearth, the hearers were faced by the narrator who was seated on the right side of the fireplace, and the wife of the host on the left. Refreshments never were served, but a clay pipe was passed around among the men and very old women. The host furnished pipe and tobacco, and the pipe was passed back to him by each person in turn after being puffed on for several minutes. Only if the story was a long one was the pipe proffered by the host to the narrator from time to time.

Most storytellers were men past the age of 60 years, but some were between 40 and 60 and a few even younger. An old narrator of reputation often called on a young man to recite in order to give him practice, if he felt that the

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rejuvenate the moribund tradition. However, several men past the age of 40 years still are able to perform jigs, reels, hornpipes, and hop-jigs with dexterity, "when the humor is on them," and are called out at parties and in the pubs; a few women will step dance in their homes or at small social gatherings.

There is considerable evidence to suggest that the rigid body and arms of the step dancer are an early nineteenth century product of Jansenist doctrine in the church, which attempted to desexualize dancing. Most of the movement is below the hips of the dancer, and it is the feet of the performer which are watched intently by the audience, at least openly. Inis Beag men move their upper bodies and arms more than is customary on the mainland, and they are not as graceful as other Irish dancers.

Figure dancing is called "set" dancing in Ireland, and there are many such dances, each of which combines a number of simple and complex figures performed by the couples. There is only one set in Inis Beag; it bears no name and is danced by one or more groups of four couples each. The many figures of the dance are simple, and it takes about 20 minutes to complete. I have heard young dancers complain at the end of a night of the tediousness of the single set, and some of them are learning other Irish figures at language school dances—"The Walls of Limerick" and "The Bridge of Athlone," among others. The most enjoyed movement of the local set is the one at the end in which the man holds his partner closely and twirls her almost violently, sometimes for longer than is prescribed so that the musician must pause or alter his rhythm. With bodily contact between partners otherwise so limited, perhaps this figure allows the expression of repressed sexuality.

Parties

It is appropriate to describe the Inis Beag party and a festive night at the pub in this chapter, because they are esthetic as well as social events, in which are combined storytelling, music, song, and dance. Parties are very much the same, whether held in the winter or the summer or to welcome home a long departed emigrant or to "drag home" a new bride. Only two rooms of the house are utilized —the kitchen and "the room" adjoining it—and benches are placed along the walls to supplement the chairs and bed on which guests will sit. The barrel or two of stout to be served is placed in the back hall off the kitchen, if there is such a hall, or in a back corner of the kitchen, and one man is assigned the task of dispensing the drink and remaining at his post throughout the night. Another man acts as "pourer" and fills a bucket from which he pours the stout into several mugs and glasses which are circulated from man to man. A bottle of whiskey is opened and proffered only to the old men, who often sit in a group beside the fireplace and exchange anecdotes and tales. On a table in "the room" are placed bottles of wine and soft drinks to accommodate the women and non-drinkers among the men before and after refreshments are served. Sometimes an elderly woman will drink surreptitiously of the whiskey or stout, and it is customary for the musicians and those who sing and step dance the most to be awarded extra amounts of stout. Women

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Women tend to drink very little at parties, in part because of the embarrassment caused them by visiting the outside toilet with men looking on.

The party commences with several sets danced in quick succession. There is room for only one dance group initially because of the small size of the kitchen and the large number of guests filling the house. It is difficult to move about the two rooms with the press of bodies, and the crowd within is matched by the cluster of men around the front door awaiting their turn to dance. Unmarried women tend to sit and stand on one side of the kitchen and men on the other, while married people congregate in the other room. Children in their best dress sit quietly together and watch the festivities tirelessly until the guests depart. Crowding at the party necessitates that men and women will be pressed together both as dancers and viewers, and that persons will sit on one another's laps, including women on the laps of men occasionally. The islanders strain to display indifference, as they do in watching a full-bodied woman step dance, at least until the intake of alcohol causes a few to betray their emotions.

Usually two or even three accordionists (and the visiting anthropologist with his phonograph) are invited to attend, and they spell one another. After an hour or so of dancing, singers and step dancers perform between the sets while stout is poured; they may be called out by the urging of the guests, or by the host or one of his choosing who acts as a master of ceremonies and directs all of the activities of the party. Stout may be distributed during the sets, but most hosts prefer that it be done during pauses, so that less is spilled by the dancing and milling crowd. The pourer with his bucket follows the movement of the mugs and glasses as they are passed about, and each man on having his container filled drains it quickly and surrenders it to another nearby. Most of the young men visit the pubs before the party and may do so again once or twice before the pubs close.

Midway during the night, the table of "the room" is set, and refreshments are served to all of the guests in shifts. First the women are served, then the children, followed by the young men who do not drink stout, and finally the other men. Both in viewing the proceedings from benches and in eating, the children are separated as to sex. The menu resembles that of the usual Inis Beag meal and includes tea, bread spread with butter and jam, cakes, and sometimes hard candy. Between the many sittings, the dishes and utensils are washed in a bucket and the table reset. Dancing continues in the kitchen during this period, and after everyone is served the table is moved to a corner and a second set is formed. The remainder of the night is spent in dancing, but the pauses which punctuate the sets become longer and the songs and step dances by guests more frequent as dawn approaches.

My wife and I sponsored a Christmas party in 1959 in the home of an islander and invited the entire population of Inis Beag. Two hours after midnight, when I was absent briefly escorting an old man to his cottage, a fight broke out between two family factions which sent all of the guests scurrying home. The following day, everyone whom we met commiserated with us "for the shame of it," and we were told of many other parties in the past which had ended in the same manner, so that we would not think our affair a failure. In recent years, "rowdyism" on the part of youths who have "taken too much" has increased at

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parties, so that many islanders will not give them for fear of possible damage to houses and outbuildings. The reason why one man is assigned to the barrel of stout and a "firm" master of ceremonies is favored is to curb drunkenness and factional fighting. Small parties are coming to replace the large ones of the past, with invitations tendered secretly and at the last moment to avoid attracting "hooligans." The format, however, has remained the same.

Pubs

Both pubs in Inis Beag do a thriving business. There are some folk who purchase all of their provisions, drinks, and tobacco in only one of the pubs, others who buy most of them in one but occasionally do business in the second, and still others who scrupulously balance their buying between the two. The first group is composed of near kin of the publicans, and the second of those who are economically beholden to the king and utilize his pub mostly, or who dislike him and give the lion's share of their business to the other. This pattern is broken only when one of the pubs is out of a commodity which the other has in stock, one of them is closed for whatever reason, a "big night" is taking place at one of them, or a dispute interferes. During the day, provisions are purchased in the shop—by children, women, and sometimes men; the women and children make their visits as brief as possible, but the men are likely to stay for at least one "pint" of stout and a "smoke." Other visitors in the daytime are chronic drinkers, men who are working nearby and use the pub for a break, and men reciprocating for economic services rendered. The pub is the province of the adult males at night, and the only women who enter are the teachers, visiting emigrants, and tourists. Seldom is step dancing done unless outsiders are present, and when women are in the audience they will be called out to form a set or to dance solo or be paired with an islander. Some nights only two or three of the folk will put in an appearance at the pub, but on other nights as many as 20 persons will crowd into the narrow room, while others in the hallway and outside wait to take their turn inside. Another half-dozen men may sit in the snug drinking and talking together privately.

Men come to the pub after dark usually in groups of two, three, or four. Reciprocity dictates the drinking procedure, with each man in a group taking his turn at "standing a round" for as long as the evening lasts. Men who do not like to drink much or have little money will come to the pub singly or with another in like circumstances, so that they will not become victims of the custom of reciprocation. My first experience with this custom—in 1958 in a neighboring island—almost ended in tragedy for me, as I was with six men who insisted on drinking "glasses" of whiskey; only my deep commitment to research and a heavy meal a short time before prevented a "third round knockout." The first hour after the men arrive in the pub is a quiet one, as they sit in silence or whisper to one another while drinking pints in rapid succession. As their shyness gradually is overcome by alcohol, they become more talkative and speak in louder tones to a wider circle of their fellows. At least two hours must pass before individuals have "courage" enough to tell stories to all assembled or to sing. The best singers will be

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later on, particularly in those families where competition for the inheritance of property is engendered among siblings by the fathers' attempts to ensure favored treatment in old age.

Men are far more active socially than are women. The latter are restricted by custom mostly to visiting, attending parties during the winter, and participating in church-associated activities. Many women leave their cottages only to attend mass, wakes, and funerals or to make infrequent calls on relatives; my wife and I talked with some elderly women who had not visited other villages or walked to the back of the island for thirty or more years. Men not only attend parties with their womenfolk but go to dances during the summer, frequent the pubs, play cards almost nightly during November and December (the period when once people congregated to hear storytellers), visit the homes of kin and friends or meet along the trails at night, and range the entire island and the sea about it in their economic pursuits. Before the age of benevolent government, women shared many economic tasks with men, such as collecting seaweed, baiting lines, and gutting fish. But now they tend to household chores and only milk cows and perform some of the lighter farming jobs with their fathers and husbands.

The island folk are devout Catholics, despite the fact that they are critical of their priests and hold pagan religious beliefs. Youth of Inis Beag overtly disallow the existence of other than church-approved supernatural entities. However, their elders cling to traditional pagan beliefs and practices (many of which are Druidic in origin) about which they are extremely secretive for fear of being ridiculed by outsiders and their more skeptical neighbors. The non-Christian array of spiritual beings includes various spirits and demons, ghosts, witches, phantom ships, and animals and material objects possessing human attributes and volitions. Prominent among the spirits thought to inhabit Inis Beag are the trooping and solitary fairies, sea creatures, mermaids, and the banshee. The most formidable of the demons is a pooka which lives in a Bronze Age burial mound and roams the strand and common land at night altering its shape and size at will; during the day it will twist the limbs of unwary persons who choose the hill for a resting place. Ghosts, called "shades," are frequently seen after dark performing economic tasks. They are thought to be doing penance in purgatory, which embraces the earth as well as a spiritual locus; this is one example of the many reinterpretations of Christian and pagan belief effected by the islanders. The only form of witchcraft practiced today is the casting of the evil eye. At least three persons, suitably ostracized, are believed to be able to perpetrate evil

regarded as a highly suggestive phrase, and I have seen it redden cheeks and lower glances in a pub. Both step- and set-dancing are practiced in Inis Beag, although the former type is dying out. This rigid-body dancing, from which sex is removed by shifting attention below the hips, appears to have originated in Ireland during the early nineteenth century. The set patterns keep partners separated most of the time; but, even so, some girls refuse to dance, because it involves touching a boy. Inis Beag men, while watching a woman step-dance, stare fixedly at her feet, and they take pains to appear indifferent when crowding at a party necessitates holding women on their laps and rubbing against them when moving from room to room. But they are extremely sensitive, nevertheless, to the entire body of the dancer and to these casual contacts, as are the women. Their covert emotional reactions (which become overt as much drink is taken) are a form of catharsis.

SEXUAL REPRESSION: ITS HISTORICAL CAUSES

Analysts of Irish character have put forth various hypotheses to account for sexual repression, ranging from the sophisticated to the absurd. The former can be classified under three rubrics: historical (e.g., the influence of ascetic monasticism, Augustinianism, and Jansenism), sociocultural (e.g., the Oedipus complex in the Irish family and male solidarity), and psychological (e.g., masochism). Beyond serious scientific consideration are such hypotheses as the loss of the Irish tongue, lack of a Catholic aristocracy, fear of Protestant libertinism, and the ever-appealed-to factors of race, climate, and the famine. In the following paragraphs, I will quote excerpts from Irish authors and from critical observers of the Irish scene, including social scientists, rather than dissect their views myself.

Paul Blanshard, in his polemical but insightful (and, in my estimation, often understated) work, *The Irish and Catholic Power*, says that "whatever the explanation, the total sexual expression of the Irish people is much less than it is in other countries, and that the Catholic crusade against normal sexual life has actually created a nation of men and women who try to drown their fundamental instincts." In attempting to account for sexual repression on such a scale, he writes:

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govern our "morality, custom, and manners" (e.g., persuasion, ridicule, and gossip). I will not consider political and economic manipulation; more significant are other techniques that I have labelled secular social control. Inis Beag, as much as any human community, is characterized by gossip, ridicule, and opprobrium. Influenced by nativism, primitivism, and structural-functional theory, writers and social scientists have painted a distorted picture of culture and personality equilibrium among Irish peasants. Actually, the folk are neither glorified Celts nor "noble savages," and dysfunctional sociocultural forms, mental aberrations (neuroses, psychoses, and psychosomatic disorders), and exaggerated defense postures abound.

Inis Beag people are ambivalent about gossip; they welcome every opportunity to engage in it, yet detest the practice when they are its victims. When asked to cite the major deficiencies of their way of life, islanders usually place the prevalence of malicious gossiping near the top of their list. Boys and men hide themselves in the darkness or behind fences to overhear the conversations of passersby; they maintain close scrutiny of visitors during the summer, both day and night, in order to discover them in "compromising" situations. Parties are organized at the last moment and persons will leave the island without any previous announcement—often to emigrate or enter the hospital or join a religious order—in order to circumvent gossip. Rumors run rife in Inis Beag, especially when they concern, for example, the "nude" sun bathing of a visiting actress (bared shoulders and lower thighs) or the "attack" on a Dublin girl late at night by an island youth (an effort to hold her hand while under the influence of stout). Over a dozen efforts on our part to determine the truth behind the most pernicious rumors of this genre revealed sexual fantasy at their core in every case.

The force most responsible for limiting the potential social activities of women—which would make their lot much easier and possibly stem the tide of emigration—is the fear of gossip: "If I went for a walk, they'd wonder why I wasn't home tending my chores." Even couples who might otherwise disregard religious teachings and the wrath of the priest do not court, because it might be observed and reported through gossip to the entire population.[7] An islander must carefully regulate his

[7] The fear of being observed, as well as repression, may account for the apparent lack of sexual contact with animals. This practice may be common among mainland peasants, if one is willing to accept as evidence the existence of a genre of dirty jokes popular there, and hearsay among certain scholars concerning confessional materials.